



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	II	Intake, Investigation and Response	
Chapter:	C	Initial Response	5-10-2010
Subchapter:	2	General	
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DEFINITIONS 12-27-2004

“Information and Referral” or “I&R” means:

The activity of informing a reporter about services available from public and private sources. Providing I&R is based on a determination of need coupled with; knowledge of CP&P, DCF and the community’s resources. I&R may be given when the person making the inquiry is not alleging that a child is an abused or a neglected child.

An “I&R” is a situation where the State Central Registry (SCR) or a Local Office can refer a caller directly to a non-CP&P community provider for needed social services.

“Information Only” means:

The provision of information in response to an inquiry, when the person making the inquiry is not alleging that a child is an abused or a neglected child.

“NJ SPIRIT” (New Jersey Statewide Protective Investigation, Reporting and Information Tool) or “NJS” means:

An electronic, web-based case management system used to support CP&P programs, services and operations, including case recording. NJ SPIRIT will automate much of the paperwork and tracking activity that are part of the Division’s child welfare service delivery system. NJ SPIRIT is being built to meet Federal requirements for a Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). NJ SPIRIT is being implemented incrementally into CP&P operations.

NJ SPIRIT screening functions became effective with the implementation of its initial phase, "Release 1," starting November, 2004.

See details in [CP&P-IX-H-1-100](#).

"Reporter" means:

An individual who contacts SCR or a CP&P office to make a CPS report, a CWS referral, or a request for social services.

"State Central Registry" or "SCR" means:

The centralized operation in CP&P responsible for screening incoming calls of suspected child abuse or neglect to the State of New Jersey. SCR operates a 24-hour "hotline," reached by dialing 1-877-NJ Abuse (1-877-652-2873) or 1-800-792-8610.

"Walk-In Reporter" or "Walk-In" means:

A member of the public who appears at a Local Office in person, requesting to make a child abuse/neglect report, a CWS referral, or a request for social services.

I&R ELIGIBILITY

12-22-2004

Who is eligible for I & R -- State Central Registry Screeners and CP&P field staff provide information and referral services to:

- Those individuals or agencies who refer a family to CP&P or who contact SCR, upon determining that CP&P is not the appropriate agency to provide the needed service;
- CP&P clients already receiving other service or currently under investigation; or
- New callers, walk-ins, or reporters who are requesting information for themselves, their children, or their families.

WHEN I&R IS APPROPRIATE 5-10-2010

Response options -- CP&P responds to all types of reports, referrals, and requests for services either by investigating the report of child abuse/neglect, assessing a family for child welfare services,

offering information and referral services, when appropriate, or providing information only.

When to I&R -- The Division may provide information and referral instead of investigating child abuse and neglect or assessing a family for the provision of child welfare services, when all of the following apply:

- The reporter requests or needs more than “information only;”
- Child abuse and neglect is not alleged; and
- The Division is not legally required to provide the requested child welfare service (see [CP&P-II-A-3-300](#)), and another part of New Jersey’s social service system or a private agency or service provider is responsible for providing the service, or available to meet the identified need.

I&R anytime -- CP&P provides information and referral at any point during agency intervention, if a need for a social service is identified.

Note: An SCR Screener documents a call about a development in a case in active status as an I&R in NJS, rather than as a request for child welfare services.

Examples: SCR receives a call from a resource family, advising that he or she took a child in care to the hospital for medical treatment related to an accidental injury. A resource family parent calls SCR to request a replacement for a misplaced Medicaid card.

In domestic violence situations, when a parent flees with a child -- N.J.S.A. 2C:13-4, requires a parent who flees with his or her child in matters of domestic violence -- “to avoid imminent physical danger” -- to make a report to the police, the County Prosecutor, or CP&P, to provide notice of the child’s location. Note: The parent is required to notify; CP&P is required to record the notification. The SCR Screener documents this call in NJ SPIRIT by completing a Screening Summary, DCF Form [1-1](#), and coding the call Information and Referral. The Screener conducts a search in NJS, to see if the family has an open case. If the case is open, the Screener notifies the primary Worker. If harm or risk of harm is alleged, screen the call in accordance with [CP&P-II-A-1-100](#) and [CP&P-VIII-B-1-100](#) , Domestic Violence, and the [DCF Domestic Violence Protocol](#) (see Section IV).

CP&P REFERRAL

5-10-2010

SCR Screener (for new matters)

- Handle incoming call to the SCR “hotline” in accordance with II B 200, State Central Registry (SCR) - Centralized Screening.
- Record the I & R in NJ SPIRIT. Gather, record, and document essential information in NJS to produce an Intake Summary template
- Make a referral to a service agency within the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Human Services, or the community.
- Print out the Intake Summary template. File a paper copy at SCR.

Local Office Designee (for new matters)

You can screen locally -- Local Offices throughout the state retain the ability to screen I&Rs and requests for child welfare services. Local Office Managers determine who will perform this function, as best for their individual office operation.

Field Office faxes report to SCR -- If you take an I&R (or a CWS referral), complete an Intake Summary (using a paper format, completing it manually), and fax a copy to SCR’s Production Control Unit for data entry, to register it in NJ SPIRIT.

Note: SCR is the only office operation within CP&P that is programmed to enter data into NJS at present. (Field offices are programmed for “read only.”)

Assigned Worker (for active cases, or matters under investigation)

- Complete an Intake Summary (using a paper format, completing it manually), and fax a copy to SCR for data entry, to register it in NJ SPIRIT.
- Inform your client of the services that are available and appropriate to meet his or her family’s identified need.

- Offer to make the referral for the client. (I&R is a voluntary program. It is up to the client to decide if he or she wishes, or is willing to accept, such help.
- If you do not provide help with the actual referral, follow up with your client or the identified service provider, to determine whether the client continues to need a service from CP&P.
- Provide your name and telephone number, including extension; advise your client that he or she can recontact you at any time for help in obtaining services, as needed.

SCR Screener (for domestic violence notification)

- Document the notification in NJS by completing a Screening Summary, DCF Form [1-1](#). Code the call I&R.
- Screen the call; conduct a records search.
- Check to see if the matter is an open case; if yes, notify primary Worker.
- If harm or risk of harm is alleged, screen report or notification in accordance with [CP&P-II-A-1-100](#) and [CP&P-VIII-B-1-100](#), Domestic Violence, and the [DCF Domestic Violence Protocol](#).

ROLLOUT OF NJ CHILD WELFARE PLAN AND COUNTY I&R PLAN 12-27-2004

New Jersey Child Welfare Plan roll out -- As more and more elements of the NJ Child Welfare Plan are introduced into practice over time, other Divisions within the Department of Children and Families, as well as an array of community social service providers and agencies, will absorb the child welfare service needs of New Jersey's children and families and, thereby, accept additional referrals from SCR and CP&P field offices.

To develop formal procedures -- As planning proceeds, SCR and CP&P, other component Divisions within the Department of Children and Families, and community social service agencies and entities within New Jersey will work together to develop and implement protocols, tools and forms, and other measures, as necessary, to formalize referral procedures, information sharing, resource development, and feedback.

Work plan together -- Division representatives in each county work with community agencies and county government to develop a county information and referral plan.

The plan's focus is a county information and referral network, which clearly defines each agency's service population. Special attention is given to those groups of people whose needs cannot be clearly identified as being appropriate for one agency or another.

Affiliation agreements are developed, to formalize the network. The network is further strengthened by:

- Open communication between service providers
- Joint decision making
- Skillful negotiation
- Resource sharing
- Electronic information exchange, which respects the privacy and confidentiality of client families

PROCEDURES RELATED TO I&R

12-27-2004

RESPONSIBILITY

ACTION REQUIRED

SCR Screener or
Local Field Office Designee

1. Determine that the request for services requires information and referral only.
2. Consult electronic or office resource guides, resource files, program directories.
3. Give the reporter/client information enabling him or her to make the appropriate request for services.

Field Office Designee

4. Initiate a telephone call or take other action, if necessary, to facilitate the referral.
5. Complete any necessary correspondence, form, tool, or written referral on behalf of the client.

SCR Screener or
Local Field Office Designee

6. Complete an Intake Summary in NJ SPIRIT (SCR Screeners), or in paper format (field staff), to document the provision of information and referral. Document where the client was referred, the recommendation for services, etc.
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SCR Screener

8. Print out Intake Summary template. File paper copy at SCR.

PROCEDURES RELATED TO A COUNTY I&R PLAN 12-22-2004

RESPONSIBILITY

Local Office Manager,
Resource Development Specialist,
or Designee

RESPONSIBILITY

1. Identify referral sources and service agencies within the local jurisdiction.
2. Meet with referral sources and service agencies to develop a county/area information and referral plan.
3. Identify and negotiate service population issues.
4. Develop affiliation agreements to include identification and agreed upon service populations.
5. Advise local office staff of affiliation agreements. Arrange/provide training to staff around I&R procedures, when to I&R, etc.
6. Develop a method to monitor local

information and referral activity.
Make adjustments, as necessary.